

**ACTIVE MODE LINE VOLTAGE REGULATOR
FOR RINGING SUBSCRIBER LINE INTERFACE CIRCUIT**

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention relates in general to telecommunication systems and subsystems therefor, and is particularly directed to a new and improved mechanism for limiting the DC voltage applied to a tip/ring
5 amplifier of a subscriber line interface circuit (SLIC) to a voltage that is allowed to comply with minimum on-hook battery requirements, yet prevents a sustained excessively high (and potentially dangerous) voltage from being applied to the SLIC.

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] Subscriber line interface circuits (SLICs) are employed by telecommunication service providers to interface a communication wireline pair with subscriber
15 equipment, including both voice and data communication devices. In order to be interfaced with a variety of telecommunication circuits including circuits providing digital codec functionality, the transmission channels of the SLIC must conform with a very demanding set of

performance requirements, including but not necessarily limited to accuracy, linearity, low noise, filtering, insensitivity to common mode signals, low power consumption, and ease of impedance matching programmability. In this regard, the DC voltage parameters of a ringing SLIC are governed by both the operational requirements of the device to which the SLIC is coupled (such as the minimum on-hook voltage (e.g., on the order of 40 VDC) required by a facsimile machine or modem), as well as telecommunication industry safety standards (that currently limit the allowable sustained DC voltage to a value of 56.5 VDC).

[0003] A reduced complexity illustration of a conventional multi-current control-based circuit amplifier architecture for complying with this requirement is diagrammatically illustrated in Figure 1, as comprising a (Tip/Ring) amplifier 10 having its non-inverting (+) input 11 coupled to a voltage dividing node 21 of a voltage divider 20. The voltage divider is formed of a pair of equal valued (R) resistors 22 and 23, that connect a DC battery voltage (VBAT) to ground (GND). The amplifier 10 has an inverting (-) input 12 coupled to an output node 13 by way of a feedback (value R) resistor 14. The inverting (-) input 12 of the amplifier is further coupled to a current source 31, which may be configured as a current mirror, and is operative to supply a current corresponding to that sensed flowing through the voltage divider 20, or $I=VBAT/2R$.

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[0004] In order to constrain the amplifier input voltage within prescribed operational limits (e.g., the above referenced 56.5 VDC value) irrespective of the value of the battery voltage VBAT, the inverting (-) input 12 of amplifier 10 is further coupled to a plurality of current source/sink circuits 32 and 33. The current mirror (sink) 32 sinks an equal and opposite polarity current $I = VBAT/2R$ from the inverting polarity (-) input node 12, so that current source/sink pair 31/32 effectively provide a pair of currents at the inverting (-) input node 12 that are complementary to those provided at the non-inverting (+) input node 11, by way of the voltage divider 20. An additional current mirror 33 is used to controllably supply the amplifier's inverting polarity (-) node 12 with an auxiliary, compensation current derived in accordance with MTU specifications and designated in Figure 1 as current $I = Vmtu/R$.

[0005] Typically, this auxiliary current is generated by sensing the current through resistors 22 and 23, and then comparing the sensed current to a threshold current reference value. The difference between these two currents is applied to current mirror 33, which produces the auxiliary current $I = Vmtu/R$. Unfortunately, such a multi-current source based regulation scheme not only dissipates substantial power, but is prone to introducing voltage regulation component-based noise into the voice path of the SLIC.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006] Pursuant to the present invention, these drawbacks are effectively obviated by dispensing with the MTU-based current compensation circuitry, and instead making a relatively simple circuit modification to the battery voltage supply path, so as to couple a voltage regulator circuit between the battery voltage terminal and the input nodes of the SLIC's tip/ring amplifiers. For present day ringing SLICs, the parameters of the voltage regulator are such as to limit its output voltage to 56.5 VDC. Thus, a battery voltage VBAT having any value less than 56.5 VDC will be replicated as such for application to the amplifier input, while a voltage at or above 56.5 VDC is limited to a value of 56.5 VDC.

[0007] In a first embodiment, the voltage regulator circuit is installed between the battery supply terminal VBAT and the battery input end of the voltage divider, to a central node of which of the tip/ring amplifier is coupled. In a second embodiment, the battery input end of the voltage divider is coupled directly to the battery terminal, while the voltage regulator is coupled to the central node to which the amplifier input is coupled. In each embodiment, the current mirror that drives the complementary input node of the amplifier is referenced to the current flowing through that portion of the voltage divider subject to the regulated voltage Vreg, so that the mirrored current is not affected by excessive battery voltage swing. To prevent noise from

being introduced into the voice path of the amplifier from the regulated DC supply circuitry, a low pass filter that passes only DC supply energy (for example, one having an upper frequency cut-off on the order to 2-
5 8 Hz), may be incorporated into the current mirror circuitry.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0008] Figure 1 diagrammatically illustrates a reduced
10 complexity illustration of a conventional multi-current control-based voltage regulation circuit for a tip/ring amplifier of a subscriber line interface circuit;

[0009] Figure 2 is a reduced complexity diagram of a first embodiment of the active mode line voltage
15 regulator for a tip/ring amplifier of a ringing subscriber line interface circuit of the invention;

[00010] Figure 3 shows a second embodiment of the active mode line voltage regulator of the invention; and

[00011] Figure 4 shows the application of the embodiment
20 of the invention of Figure 3 to both tip and ring amplifiers of a ringing subscriber line interface circuit.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

25 [00012] Before detailing the active mode subscriber line interface circuit voltage regulator of the present invention, it should be observed that the invention resides primarily in a prescribed arrangement of conventional communication circuits and voltage

regulation components therefor. As a consequence, this arrangement has been shown in the drawings by readily understandable block diagrams and associated circuit diagrams, which depict only those specific details that are pertinent to the present invention, so as not to obscure the disclosure with particulars apparent to those skilled in the art having the benefit of the description herein, whereby the invention may be more readily understood.

10 [00013] Attention is now directed to Figure 2, which is a reduced complexity diagram of a first embodiment of the active mode line voltage regulator for a respective tip/ring amplifier of a ringing subscriber line interface circuit of the invention. (It is to be understood that the polarities shown in Figure 2 may be reversed, without a loss in generality.) Similar to the conventional circuit of Figure 1, a respective (Tip/Ring) amplifier 10 has its non-inverting (+) input 11 coupled to the voltage dividing node 21 of voltage divider 20 formed of a pair of equal valued (R) series-coupled resistors 22 and 23. A first end 25 of the voltage divider is referenced to a prescribed voltage (shown as GND) and a second end 24 thereof is coupled to receive a prescribed DC voltage (derived from the battery voltage (VBAT)). Also, as in Figure 1, the inverting polarity (-) input 12 of the amplifier 10 is coupled to output node 13 by way of a feedback resistor 14 (having a value R), and to a (current mirror-configured) current source 41.

[00014] In accordance with the invention, rather than the current source 41 driving the amplifier input (-) node 12 with a current based upon the actual battery voltage VBAT, and having to couple that node to an additional, substantial power-dissipating set of voltage regulation current sources as described above, voltage regulation is realized by a relatively simple modification of the input path from battery VBAT to the voltage divider 20 for the (+) input node 11. In particular, a voltage regulator circuit (of conventional configuration) 50 is installed between the battery terminal VBAT and the second end 24 of the voltage divider 20.

[00015] For the presently discussed example of a ringing SLIC, the parameters of the voltage regulator 50 are such as to limit its output voltage to 56.5 VDC. Thus, a battery voltage VBAT having any value less than 56.5 VDC would be replicated as such at the input terminal end 24 of the voltage divider 20, while a voltage at or above 56.5 VDC would be limited to a value of 56.5 VDC at node 24. Thus, the current through the voltage divider 20 and therefore the current supplied to amplifier input node 12 by the current source 41 is based upon the regulated voltage V_{reg} output by the voltage regulator 50, rather than upon the battery voltage VBAT. In particular, the current supplied by current source 41 is the current $I = V_{reg}/2R$.

[00016] In order to prevent noise from being introduced into the voice path of the amplifier, a low pass filter that passes only DC supply energy (for example, one

having an upper frequency cut-off on the order to 2-8 Hz), may be incorporated into the current mirror circuitry, through which the current flowing through the voltage divider 20 is sensed and mirrored by way of
 5 current mirror 41 into the inverting node 12 of the amplifier 10. Such a low pass filter (LPF) is shown at 43 in the input path of the current mirror 41.

[00017] Rather than couple the voltage regulator 50 between the battery VBAT and the voltage divider 20, as
 10 in the first embodiment of Figure 2, the terminal end 24 of the voltage divider 20 may be coupled directly to the battery terminal as in Figure 1, and the voltage regulator 50 coupled directly to the node 21 to which the amplifier (+) input 11 is coupled, as shown in
 15 Figure 3. In this embodiment, fluctuations in the battery voltage VBAT above Vreg only affect the differential voltage across resistor 23. The current mirror 41 is referenced to the current flowing through resistor 22 of the voltage divider 20, so that its value
 20 ($I = V_{reg}/R$) is not affected by an excessive battery voltage swing and remains defined by Vreg, but with a single resistor divisor (the value of resistor 22).

[00018] Figure 4 shows the application of the embodiment of the invention of Figure 3 to both tip and ring
 25 amplifiers of a ringing subscriber line interface circuit. Here, respective Tip and Ring amplifiers 10T and 10R have their non-inverting (+) inputs 11T and 11R coupled in common to the reference node 21 of the voltage divider 20. The inverting polarity (-) input 12T

of the Tip amplifier 10T is coupled to its output node 13T by feedback resistor 14T and to a current source 41T. Similarly, the inverting polarity (-) input 12R of the Ring amplifier 10R is coupled to its output node 13R by a feedback resistor 14R and to a current source 41R. As in the embodiment of Figure 3, the current mirrors 41T and 41R are referenced to the current flowing through the resistor 22 of the voltage divider 20, and generate opposite polarity currents $I = V_{reg}/R$, as shown.

Figure 4 also shows respective low pass filters 43T and 43R incorporated with the current mirror circuits 41T and 41R, to prevent high frequency noise from being introduced into the tip and ring amplifiers, as described above.

[00019] As will be appreciated from the foregoing description, circuit complexity and power consumption drawbacks of conventional MTU-based current compensation circuitry of ringing SLIC architectures are effectively obviated by coupling a voltage regulator circuit between the battery voltage terminal and the input nodes of the SLIC's tip/ring amplifiers. Since the current mirror that drives the complementary input node of the amplifier is referenced to the current flowing through that portion of the voltage divider subject to the regulated voltage V_{reg} , the mirrored current will not be affected by excessive battery voltage swing. Also, incorporating a low pass filter into the current mirror circuitry prevents the introduction of noise from the DC supply circuitry into the voice path of the amplifier.

[00020] While we have shown and described several
embodiments in accordance with the present invention, it
is to be understood that the same is not limited thereto
but is susceptible to numerous changes and modifications
5 as known to a person skilled in the art, and we
therefore do not wish to be limited to the details shown
and described herein, but intend to cover all such
changes and modifications as are obvious to one of
ordinary skill in the art.

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